



TRICARE SENIOR PRIME
OFFICE OF PLAN ADMINISTRATION
TRICARE Northwest
Madigan Army Medical Center
Tacoma, Washington 98431

Number 98-4

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Information Alert

SUBJECT: Three (3) Day Hospitalization Before Referral to Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF)

The following clarifies the rule with regard to the number of days for hospitalization before referral to a Skilled Nursing Facility, and provides guidance for waiver.

ISSUE: Under Medicare Fee-for-Service rules a patient must remain in an acute care facility for three (3) days before transfer to a SNF is authorized. The TRICARE Senior Prime program adopted that rule, however recent discussion has resulted in our authority to waive the requirement.

HCFA INPUT: The HCFA Regional Office has indicated that because the "three day" rule is a FFS requirement, Medicare HMOs (TSP) can adopt the rule or as they choose, waive the requirement.

REGION 11 TSP WAIVER: In accordance with the guidance from HCFA Regional Office and the TRICARE Management Office we will waive the requirement for inpatient hospitalization immediately prior to transfer to a SNF.

The following is required: 1) A shorter inpatient stay (less than three (3) days) is medically indicated. 2) The Chief, Utilization Management (or designee), Madigan has reviewed and approves of the early transfer, and 3) The Utilization Manager, Office of the Lead Agent is notified of the early transfer.

This information should be provided to administrators and providers involved with the implementation, training or delivery of care for TRICARE Senior Prime.